

January 1977

The BEGONIAN



GENERAL OFFICES:

Dues, address changes, or magazines:

8302 Kittyhawk Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90045

Subscription: \$5.00 per year. Foreign (Mexico and Canada) \$5.50. U.S. (Mexico and Canada) 1st Class \$8.00. Overseas Air Mail \$17.00. Pay in U.S. currency only. Single back issues 75¢.

Second Class Postage Paid at Los Angeles, California

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The Board of Directors will meet January 24 at South Gate Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. Deadline for the March issue is January 31.

Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the editors, the society, or its officers.

THE BEGONIAN ADVERTISING RATES

	One Time
Full Page	\$80.00
Half Page	40.00
Quarter Page	25.00
Per Inch	10.00

5% Discount for 4 or more consecutive runs.

AIMS AND PURPOSES OF THE AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY

The purpose of this Society shall be:

TO stimulate and promote interest in *Begonia* and other shade-loving plants;

TO encourage the introduction and development of new types of these plants;

TO standardize the nomenclature of *Begonia*;

TO gather and publish information in regard to kinds, propagation and culture of *Begonia* and companion plants;

TO issue a bulletin which will be mailed to all members of the Society; and

TO bring into friendly contact all who love and grow *Begonia*.

BEGONIA PICTA RETURNS

Cover photo by Philip Seitner, Chicago, Illinois

Last January the cover of the *Begonian* featured *Begonia picta* growing in its natural habitat. It was accompanied by two articles, one by Ganesh Mani Pradhan about the plants in their home territory and another by Thelma O'Reilly about her experiences in growing *B. picta* from seed. The articles generated several interesting letters, which Mrs. O'Reilly shares here with you.

From Robert Hamm Wichita Falls, Texas

About two years ago I ordered and received some *B. picta* seed from India. I planted it, immediately upon arrival, in sterilized soil in a closed container and kept the container warm (70°F.) and under long days (16 hrs.) under lights. *B. picta* came up like a forest. I was busy transplanting in no time. I transplanted into both open and closed containers for comparison. The plants in pots grew slowly and went dormant before flowering. The *B. picta* in containers was an entirely different story however. The container plants grew rapidly, developing beautiful variegated leaves and with one plant producing leaves up to 5 inches long and 4 inches wide.

Within about three months in the containers I had beautiful rosy pink blossoms. The plants continued to flower for over three months until there was an unexpected chill in the plantroom that sent them all dormant.

On dormancy in *B. picta* I have some observations of my plants that are interesting. Mine act like glox-

inia tubers in that tubers kept warm, damp, under high humidity and long days grow back almost immediately, whereas those kept drier, cool, under low humidity or short days stay dormant.

Recently I had one pot that refused to start up again after 5 months, so I placed it in a container of moss, under strong light (16 hrs.), and where it would receive heat from the light below, and it came up within a week.

I would tend to hypothesize that *B. picta* is a plant that due to its natural growing conditions is adapted to very narrow limits and any variation from these limits, even a chill or temporary shortage of light, will tend to send it dormant.

For those persons trying to grow *B. picta* without success I suggest—

- 1) Keep it in a container or under high humidity.
- 2) Grow under long duration lights or seed after March 22 so it will grow during the long days of the year (Mar. 22-Sept. 21 in northern hemisphere)
- 3) Keep it warm, over 65°F.

From John Scott Victoria, Australia

I have been growing *B. picta* for about two years now, with little success. It seemed to grow easily enough yet did not get more than two or three leaves. As it has such a beautifully marked leaf, I have tried many different mixes and under lights . . . I tried planting the little tuber in moss on a rock, as I had read that

was how it grew naturally. It is now flowering nicely with quite large lilac-pink flowers. The moss is "bush" moss—that is; gathered in our wooded countryside. This I laid over the piece of lava rock and embedded some tiny tubers (about 3/16 in.) diameter in the moss. As there is practically no soil, it is placed in my glasshouse where it gets a mist from an automatic misting system.

The leaves are not so large as yours were, about 2 1/2 in. in diameter, but variously marked. Some are plain green and one is very dark. The male flower is 1-11/4 in. and the female flower is slightly larger with five petals; the male flower has four petals.

I also have it growing on a piece of driftwood, doing quite well with flower buds coming. I'm now trying it on a piece of moss-covered wood. I had the rock specimen at our indoor plant show this past weekend where it created considerable attention and again at our indoor plant meeting where I won a trophy for the most interesting exhibit.

From Gordon Lepisto St. Paul, Minn.

You remember you sent me seeds of *B. picta* a little over a year ago . . . well, all the seeds germinated, quite fast, I think within days. I grew six plants, discarding the rest of the seedlings. Four were given away to friends and I grew the remaining two until they flowered and went dormant. Both plants remained quite small, about 6" high but loaded with large delicate pink flowers . . . I grew the plants on the open bench in the fluorescent plant room. The humidity is very high, about 90%. Both plants

were growing in seedling size orchid fir bark chips, kept moist at all times. Flowering started when the plants were very small and continued for several months during the summer. I didn't realize they went dormant, or at least wasn't sure, until I read your article. Right away I examined the old pots in the corner of my plant room. Sure enough I discovered tubers in both . . . I think that each year as the tubers become larger, there will be larger plants . . .

Two months ago, just before dormancy set in, I took a leaf cutting and inserted it into moist fir bark, same as I would a rex and today I went to examine it . . . two small tubers had formed, well rooted with tiny green shoots coming up. I suppose the reason the cutting took so long to start a new plant was the formation of the tubers first . . . But that is not all, I crossed *B. picta* with *B. versicolor* and vice versa — the crosses took and the seeds were planted a month ago. I now have hundreds of tiny seedlings, or should say 1/8 in. specks, from both crosses. I am really excited about what will develop from this.

From Hazel Burley Brisbane, Australia

I bought the seed from India at the end of 1973 and planted it at once, using my usual mix. It was summer here in Queensland. It came up thickly and grew to about two inches by winter. I became ill around this time and . . . more or less left them to themselves, still in the small pots in a plastic wrapped box. When I got busy again with my plants, I noticed they were gone . . . I emptied
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HYBRIDIZING FOR BEGINNERS

By Elda Haring

In collaboration with Yvonne Wells

Photos by Walter Haring



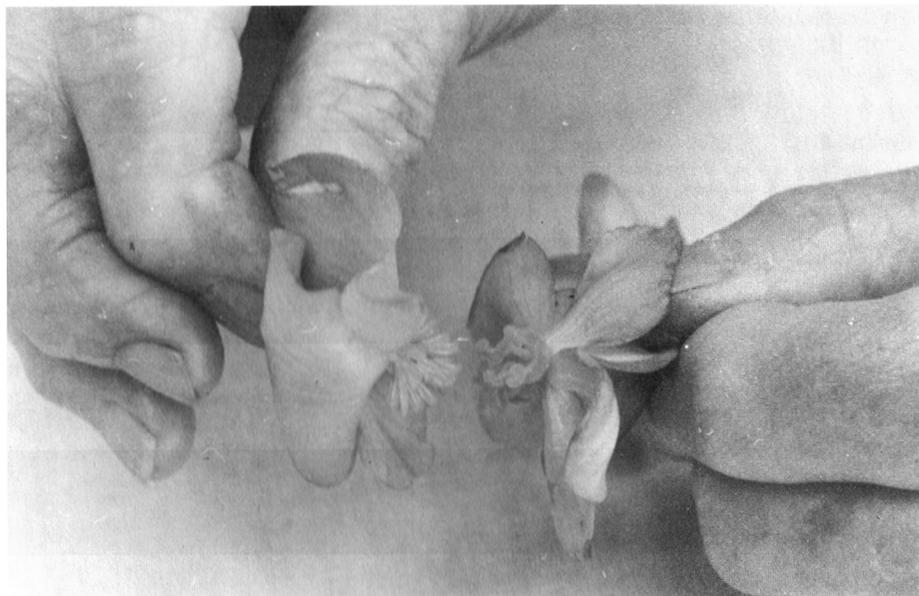
Left to right—Walter Haring, Yvonne Wells, and Elda Haring. Photo taken at the convention in San Diego where these Round Robin friends met for the first time in person.

“What could be more fun than creating something of your very own, something no one else has ever done?” Yvonne asks. Until you have tried and succeeded you will never experience the great pleasure and excitement of plant breeding. Most of us are reluctant to try our hands at hybridizing because it seems mysterious and possibly difficult.

What is hybridizing? It is simply the process of placing the pollen from the male flower of one plant on the pistils of the female flower of another to obtain a new plant whose characteristics differ somewhat — or possibly greatly — from either of the originals. If a species is self-pollinated by placing pollen of the male flower on the female flower on the same plant the seedlings should be typical (or “come true” as they say) of the mature plant (assuming that insects have not carried pollen from one plant to another.) Experts tell

us that the seed parent contributes the general plant structure and the pollen parent color of bloom. For the benefit of beginners, a *Begonia* species is a plant found growing wild in the tropics or semi-tropics. It is designated in italics using a small letter to begin the second word, as *Begonia evansiana*. Begonias readily cross pollinate and the resultant seedling plant is no longer a species but a hybrid and is shown with a capital first letter on second name and enclosed in single quotes as *Begonia* ‘Universe’, often just *B.* ‘Universe’.

Begonias have individual male and female flowers on the same plant. If you study the flowers you will observe that some have a noticeable swelling behind the petals, usually triangular in shape, which is the ovary or potential seed pod, while others do not. Those with the ovary are the female flowers containing the



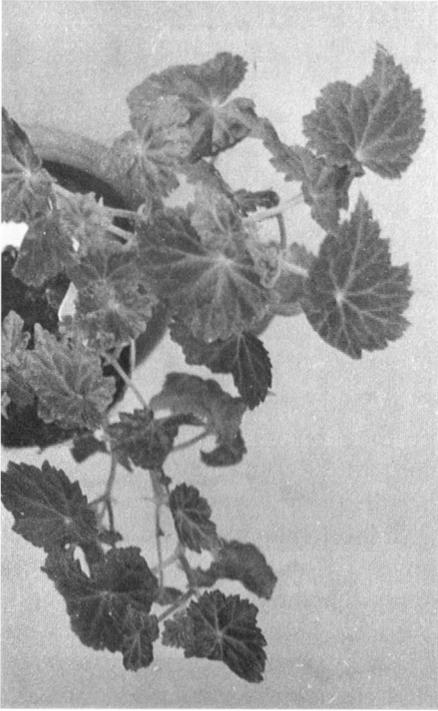
To pollinate, brush stamens of male flower on pistils of female flowers.

pistils and those lacking the ovary are the male flowers carrying pollen bearing stamens. Experienced hybridizers carefully select parent plants with specific traits such as color and leaf texture in the hope of creating a new hybrid of unusual beauty. The beginner need not be concerned with such selectivity but should try his luck with the begonias he grows. Yvonne's registered hybrid *B.* 'Fuzzy Buzz' was the result of crossing *B. masoniana* with *B. subnummularifolia*. Crossing a hybrid with a species or crossing two hybrids usually results in many variations that may or may not be of special merit. You will never know until you try.

Begin your hybridizing program by checking your plants for open flowers that are fresh and select those you would like to cross. If you are fortunate to get profuse bloom on your begonias this is no problem. If

your experience is like mine and your conditions do not produce a great many blooms you will find yourself choosing a male blossom and going over your collection to find a suitable female blossom. Recently I crossed *B. sutherlandii* with *B. pearcei* because they were all that I had at the time. What a thrill after seed was sown and germinated to find that the seedlings showed the trailing tendency of *B. sutherlandii*, but with the more succulent leaf texture of *B. pearcei* with its typical white veining and all of the leaves having a "frilly" aspect. It will take many months, however, for these seedlings to reach maturity and bloom before they can be properly evaluated.

Yvonne finds that the male blossom releases its pollen more freely on a sunny day between 11 and 3 o'clock. Pollen is usually ripe when top and bottom petals bend back



B. sutherlandii x *B. pearcei*

slightly. To be receptive to the pollen, the female flower should have been open 2 to 3 days. Hold the male flower by the bent back petals and lightly brush pollen on the pistils of the female flowers. To make doubly sure the pollen has been transferred, repeat the process the next day if possible.

It is very important to keep a notebook record of the crosses you have made. Record the date and the names of the parent plants with the name of the seed parent first and pollen parent last. A small strip of paper around the stem of the pollinated blossoms and fastened with a paper clip to note the cross is helpful. A strip of aluminum foil on which you have marked the crosses could be used or a piece of white string can be

tied loosely around the stem to indicate that the flowers have been pollinated.

If pollination has not been successful the blooms will probably fall from the plant. If, however, petals close and ovary swells you can expect seed. Allow pods to remain on the plant until they lose their green color and stems seem dry. This may take 2 to 4 weeks. The pod is usually ready to be harvested when it feels papery and the stem is turning brown. If you wait too long, pods become too dry and seed will spill out. Removed too soon when the pod is still green, the seed is immature, and will not germinate. When you think the pod is ready gently snip from the stalk with scissors and place in a dry envelope together with a label recording the names of the parent plants. Let the pod dry a few days and open carefully over a piece of white paper. Break pod to allow seeds to fall out. Remove chaff with tweezers and enclose in the paper carefully folding edges so as not to lose the seed. Be sure to place the label with the packet. Fresh seed usually germinates readily in 7 to 14 days, but as Yvonne puts it, however long it takes, it is worth it to see the new plants that you alone have created.

Sow fresh seed immediately, but reserve some for resowing in case of failure. Use a sterile seedling medium such as equal parts vermiculite, milled sphagnum and perlite. *The Thompson Begonia Guide* recommends 2 parts vermiculite, 2 of perlite to 1 of Jiffy Mix. If you use potting mixes make sure they are sterile

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OUR LIVING BEGONIA HERITAGE

By Evelyn Weidner, San Miguel Branch, San Diego

In the beginning God created Adam, Eve and "the begonia" . . . and the cactus, the apple (caused a little problem there), the tomato, potato and watermelon. Ever since, man has spent much of his time with plants: sometimes at work like the wheat farmer, sometimes for simple pleasure in the backyard. But always the growing of plants and especially the discovery of a new species or variety have been an irresistible urge within man.

I just finished reading again that marvelous book of David Fairchild's, *The World Was My Garden*. If you haven't had the pleasure of that book, I suggest it to you. It is a fascinating story of a man who traveled the world looking for plants of use and interest to mankind.

All through history the collection and preservation of plants has been of great importance. On every early exploration of unknown places, a botanist went along. Many of them lost their lives searching for new plants. When did the begonia come into the history of plants? As we look at the beginning we find that it was named for a French botanist, Michel Begon, who was, in 1700, the Governor of Santo Domingo. Linnaeus included it in his book in 1735, but it was not until 1777 that Dr. William Brown sent the begonia to England. After Dr. Brown, others from all over the world began to send new specimens of begonia to their homelands: Sir Joseph Banks, Jonas Dryander . . . even Rear Admiral Bligh from that famous ship,

the *Bounty*, sent home *Begonia macrophylla*. Begonias came from all over: Africa, Japan, Java, the rex from India, the tuberous from South America. So began that "Living Heritage" that we are involved with.

I doubt very much if any of those men thought of themselves as being a part of a "heritage." In all probability they were far too busy watering their plants and scratching mosquito bites. But they were part of that "heritage," part of that "Living Heritage," that we are talking about tonight. These people cared enough to send home plants that they discovered. Not only begonias were sent, for like you, they were interested in many varieties. I dare say that all of you are interested and active in many fields of plant culture. One cannot remain locked into one area alone. The plants themselves lure one on and on, in an endless search.

Where does our particular part in this "Living Heritage" begin? We know that always when there is a special interest in some one plant or hobby of another kind, people gather to exchange ideas, swap materials and help each other solve problems, so, of course, it came about that the Begonia Society was born in Long Beach in 1932 with seven members. From that time on it grew and grew. Why? Because people care — people like you. They care enough to put in long hours writing articles and books, hybridizing begonias, picking the best plants from hundreds of crosses, spending long hours



Evelyn Weidner, speaker at the San Diego Convention banquet. This article is the text of her address.

at time consuming tasks, often fruitless, but sometimes with the sweet reward of something fine and beautiful. These people deserve to be honored here tonight.

Think of Alice Clark, known for her work with begonias and her beautiful paintings; Rudolf Ziesenhenné and his studies and hybrids; San Diego pioneers, Virgil Start and Alfred D. Robinson; Mrs. Fewkes, hybridizer and manager of the Del Mar Fair Flower Show for many years; Theodosia Burr Shepherd from Ventura; Connie Bowers, who hybridized so many begonias; Eva Kenworthy Gray who wrote the first booklet in English about begonias, San Diego's Kate Sessions, famous for her nursery and work with plants; the William Grants — the list could go on and on. I haven't even mentioned people from the East or out of our immediate area.

If you could look into the minds and hearts of these early begonia pioneers, you would not find great visions of their own glory, nor even

many thoughts of fame. Nevertheless they were a very real part of what I choose to call a "Living Heritage of the Begonia."

Most of you here tonight do not think of yourselves as famous or world renowned. You are merely doing those things that give pleasure and satisfy that inner urge to create and work for new and better begonias. I do not know how many of you will go down in the records of begonia history . . . some will, but the majority will not. What then, of the rest of us? I put myself in the category of the non-famous. I'm not even a good grower. My husband, Bob, is the grower, the one who *knows* from 35 years as a professional grower. Oh yes, I grew up in the retail nursery business, married into the wholesale foliage plant business, devoted some years to our own "two-legged" type of nursery with our four hybrid sprouts, then finally came full circle to retail with our Tuberous Begonia Gardens. Probably this is the most pleasant way to make some money and be among my beloved tuberous begonias. It is a perfect combination: Bob does the growing and I talk to all the people that come to our place.

I joined the Begonia Society way back, at the age of sixteen. The North Long Beach Branch . . . I can't remember all that much about it, except that I was the "darling" of the branch. How could I miss? I was the only one in it under 50! I remember being Queen of the Begonia Show in Long Beach some time in the late 40's. I had a marvelous time in that branch and the people were warm, loving folks.

But will I be remembered as famous or important? Of course, not famous. But I am at least important, if not famous. You are important, too. You are part of the "Living Begonia Heritage." For as I look at it, the Begonia Society is the most important core of this heritage. It is the dedicated amateur alone who will spend the countless hours required for the care and propagation of those precious varieties that we love but are too slow or too unusual to make them commercially profitable. Without you many of these varieties would be lost forever!



Permit me now to turn to a more practical vein. In the weeks since you asked me to speak — and thank you for asking me, it is indeed a great honor — I've spent much time thinking about the Begonia Society and the begonia heritage. These thoughts led me mostly to the Society meetings. The more I thought about begonia heritage, the more convinced I became that the Society is the very heart and core of that heritage. If that is so, we need to pay some attention to the Society meetings.

We are in the midst right now of the biggest plant and nature boom that has come for many a year. The front runners in that boom and many of its most intelligent and ardent supporters are young people. The middle agers have been the follow-alongers in this resurgence of plant interest. These are the same young people who are flooding our college

horticultural courses and who are already carrying major responsibilities in the field of horticulture.

A few years ago you rarely saw a young person truly interested in plants. Now Bob and I see them every day during the begonia season, eager, bright, responsible young people. Some of them *have* found their way into the various garden clubs and I am sure that more of them will. We need to be putting major thought and emphasis into making our club meetings and our club image more relevant and inviting to young people. There is no reason why garden clubs should be as they were when I was growing up: an over 50 sort of group. We need and should have *every single age group*. There does not need to be a generation gap!



During the summer season I had a survey available for anyone who wished to fill it out. Let me share with you some of the answers on garden clubs and what the responders think of as their problems and pluses.

I would belong to a garden club if . . . "If I had more time" was the most frequent phrase completing this statement. It would be my own reply probably. Let's face it, we are a society of very busy people. Every organization is vying for our free time, the Boy Scouts, YMCA, church, movies, TV, the golf course. There is no end to the ways in which we are being besieged on every hand to part with those precious hours of leisure that are ours. It then follows as day

does night that, if your club is going to attract and hold a membership, you must have good, meaty, solid, interesting programs. For every hour spent, the people must have *value received*. The average club has the reputation of long, boring, piddling, nitpicking business meetings with endless reports. Precious minutes are wasted over who is going to do what next. Good friends, this is criminal! By that I mean that if your club is guilty, you are helping to murder this "Living Heritage." For the effective and fast moving meeting, the minutes and all possible announcements may be printed ahead of time and distributed to the members. All are quite capable of reading. Club positions and problems should be argued out in committee meetings over cups of coffee where, incidentally, they become interesting and not at all boring. They do not belong in front of some poor bewildered guest who thought he was going to learn about plants.

Another frequent response to the first statement, especially among young people, was: "I would belong to a garden club if I knew more about plants . . . or if I had a green thumb."

When I thought about these replies, I came to the conclusion that each club must decide what kind of group it wants to be. A group aimed at the enthusiast? Nothing is wrong with that kind of group—the expert needs a place. A group that seeks to teach and encourage even the beginner? That is good, too. But know what you want to be and then actively promote that image.

Not much is done to reach out to

new people, especially if you are reaching out to find the young or beginner gardener. At our retail begonia gardens, thousands of people come through the gates. They come from a large area of Los Angeles and San Diego counties—potential Begonia Society members! Not one club puts up notices of club meetings. The Convention was the exception. We had heard many people say they wanted to attend because they saw the notice at our place of business. A brainstorming session at one of your local meetings on how to reach out creatively might come up with the following ideas: (1) Begonia Information Days at local nurseries—one or two members with exhibits of begonias, informational talks on the begonia and lots of information on the local club—along with some way of getting the names and addresses of the interested persons so that they can be contacted with a follow-up second invitation; (2) an invitational sheet handed out to a new area of homes, inviting the new home owner to a special meeting on planting a shade garden; (3) mini shows in shopping center malls. They are excellent and a perfect way to reach people; (4) a mini show and some educational questions and answers at the college campus. Sounds like a lot of work? Well, it is, but it's fun work and rewarding work, too.



The next question on the survey was: *what are some of the best things about garden clubs?* Two things stood out above all others: the friend-

liness of the members and the exchange of ideas. Over and over were mentioned small cluster groups within the meeting, plant forums on problems, visiting each other at homes, warm and friendly things that happen at garden clubs. These are what people think of in positive terms when they think of the garden club. Let me suggest right now that the visiting and talk should be during the social time and should be creatively done so that the talk doesn't drift. Keep discussion moving. Give everybody a chance.

One of the good things about clubs, but also one of the problems is the expert, the person who knows all the basics and is interested in the difficult. How do you keep his interest and still not intimidate the novice? This calls for creative thinking on the part of the board of the club.

Do things differently! Every board meeting should spend some time evaluating the past meetings and considering how to make the next meetings exciting and inviting. Think of the visitor's point of view as well as the member's. The garden clubs have a great reputation for friendliness. Let us keep it that way.



The third question was on the worst things about garden clubs. The answers to that you can almost guess by now: too long business meetings, meetings that drag on, too much talk — talk — talk, a know-it-all-attitude of some members, cliques. These problems are common to any organization, but that does not mean

that they should not be dealt with and corrected.

The last part of the survey was a list of program ideas which I asked people to rank in their appeal. Remember that any topic can be interesting or dull depending on how it was handled.

"How to start my own" came to the top. Actual practice sessions on plant propagation came in near the bottom. Why? Poor communication on the survey or people too insecure to try in front of others? I do not know the answer to that one.

The plant exchange table and being able to purchase plants was judged one of the favorite activities. Insect and disease control was way up there on the list. So was the sharing of members' experiences in growing plants. At the very bottom were the slide shows. I can understand this . . . I've used slides myself and there is a reaction to slides that seems to put half your audience to sleep immediately. No more than a half a dozen slides should be shown at a time without a break to turn on the lights and talk to people face to face. Outside speakers are usually not as much fun as listening to someone who is known to the members.



Taking the survey was an interesting experience. It made me think a

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lot about the Begonia Society and the club meeting. I hope reading about it will cause you to think also.

I find it tremendously exciting to be present at this time when there is such a surge of interest in all things growing. What a challenge for all of us! We are truly a "Living Heritage," for it is for the next generation that we are working. Because of this I urge you not to get discouraged or become complacent. Put your whole effort into what you do. Be aware of *your* importance in the history of the begonia.

There is a poem that has long been a favorite of mine, called *The Bridge Builder*. At the end of the poem the question is posed to the old man as to why he came back across the swollen stream to build a bridge. After all he had already

crossed over. He answers this way:

The builder lifted his old gray head.

"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,

"There followeth after me today
A youth whose feet must pass this way.

This chasm that has been naught to me

To that fair haired youth may a pitfall be.

He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;

Good friend, I am building the bridge for him."

You and I, Good Friends, are building a bridge on which to pass along the "Living Begonia Heritage."

The poem quoted above was written by Will Allen Drumgoole.

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BEGONIA 'MABEL CORWIN'

Trophy winner at 1976 national show
Photographed by William J. Kammerer, West Covina, Calif.
Grown by Mabel Corwin, Vista, Calif.
Hybridized by Belva Kusler, Siren, Wisconsin
Introduced in 1969
ABS register number 509 (Beg 5/76)
Parents — *B. listida* x *B. 'Jill Adair'*

Notes — Shrubby begonia, about 2 ft. tall, with *listida*-like foliage. Leaves deep green with leathery texture and dull satin sheen, wine red on underside. Flowers white with some red hairs on back of sepals; everblooming habit. A hardy type that can be grown outside with protection from direct sun and freezing.



BEGONIA 'CRESTABRUCHII'

Ribbon winner at 1976 Flower Show

Photographed by William J. Kammerer, West Covina, Calif.

Grown by Dennis Torzeski, El Cajon, Calif.

Hybridized by Helen Lewis, San Marcos, Calif.

Introduced in 1938

Parents — *B. manicata crispa* x *B. heracleifolia* var. *sunderbrunchii*

Notes — Rhizomatous type with large, glossy, lettuce green leaves, having margins much crested. Flowers pink, held well above foliage, in late winter. A collector's begonia, considered difficult to maintain, has a tendency to decline. Has won frequent trophies and prizes at shows. Adelaide Brest (1957) reported that plants resulting from self-pollination showed little variation from parent but were much more vigorous with less tendency to decay.

A MAN'S HOME IS HIS JUNGLE

By Bill Farmer, St. Paul, Minnesota

Life, as we know it, was just starting to get nice and tidy. A fellow knew what to expect.

Then, one dark night, when no one was watching, green things started growing out of everyone's ceilings. And now one cannot tippy-toe around in a dark room without being ka-bonged on the forehead by some hanging pot of spinach that swings from a macrame sling.

"If God had wanted green things to hang in mid-air, He'd have given the philodendron wings," I told an ex-friend recently.

I had packed my machete and gone to visit him in the densest recesses of his living room.

"Is this a residence or is it the Olympic rain forest?" I muttered, removing pith helmet and mopping a fevered brow.

"I can't talk to you now. I have to water," he put me off brusquely. "Come back a week from this Tuesday."

"It takes you that long to water?" I rejoined.

"That's just the ivy. I have to use an atomizer and wash the backs of their leaves because they are susceptible to little red spiders."

"Let me get this straight. You invested \$300 to create this botanical gardens that would shame the Busch family in order to provide salads for hordes of little red spiders?"

He did not reply. In fact, he'd disappeared.

"W-where are you?" I called out.

"Over behind the wandering jew plants. We call them Henry Kissinger

plants. Heh. Heh."

"Heh, Heh," I stated.

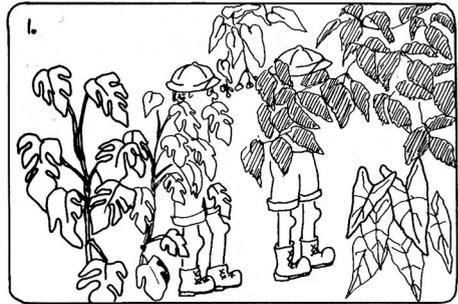
He told me to take a left at the next terrarium and to dog leg past the French Equatorial Dining Room he had created. A macaw sassed loudly as I approached.

"Confound it, you've got to quit this stupid —!"

"Shhh! Not so loud."

"Why?" I whispered, shooting glances over my shoulder.

"The plants can hear you and —"



I uttered an expletive that weighs heavily in the pastures of most breeding cattle.

"It's true. Don't you have any plants?"

Of course I do. Two plants grace my office. The brown one and the withered one.

"Don't you water them regularly?"

"No. Not exactly. I coffee them. Whenever I don't finish a cup of coffee I dump a half cup on them. Sometimes they get so jittery they stay up all night. I've been thinking of switching to decaffeinated," I explained.

My friend put down his atomizer and stared at me in the frigid manner of a motorcycle cop with an ear ache.

"You don't."

"I do."

After a pause and shake of the

head he told me that I was dangerously close to getting a citation from his indoor gardening club.

"It's an A.P.S., if ever I saw one."

"An A.P.S.?" I asked, backing away.

"Abused Plant Syndrome," he said, looking at me as though I'd just kicked Lassie. "We should have you removed by court order as their legal guardian."

"Well," I said in my defense, "I-I dress it up with an occasional shot of stale Diet Rite from time to time."

He lunged at me with a pruning scissors; but with catlike grace I side-stepped him, and the poor chap was subdued.

He'll be all right in a few days . . . if we keep him in indirect light.

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MORE SEEDS FOR THE CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND

By Pearl Benell, Seed Fund Administrator

Clayton M. Kelly of Long Beach was one of the persons responsible for the fantastic growth of interest in begonias in the early 1930s. He was the first research director of the American Begonia Society and a guiding light to a group called the Armchair Explorers. This group wrote letters to botanic gardens all around the world in search of seeds and information about varieties not yet popular in the California area. Members of the group paid a flat fee for the year. As seeds arrived they were divided among the members whose names were on the list and mailed to them in January. The reports of the group were interesting to all the society members, so they were published in the early bulletins along with cultural information.

Lambert E. Day succeeded Kelly as research director and seed fund administrator. Mr. Day reported in 1941 that nearly three thousand packets of seeds were mailed out, which included thirty-seven varieties. The research department was reorganized in 1942 by the appointments of a separate research director and a seed fund administrator. When Kelly died in December 1942, it was decided that the seed fund would henceforth be known as the Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund in his honor.

As the society grew, more and more beginners were added to the membership list and participants could request seed collections for beginner, intermediate or advanced growers. It was the prerogative of

the seed fund administrator to allot the varieties. Eventually, as seeds were more plentiful, and more growers participated in collecting and sending their excess seeds, collections were made up, grouping varieties. Anyone could order a specific collection including from one to sometimes ten or twelve varieties. Eventually in the '50s, the varieties were listed in the *Begonian* so members could order specific begonias from the lists. Since that time, lists have been published monthly. At present, participants in the Seed Fund number into the thousands. At times during the past several months, it has been necessary to call upon friends to help with mailings. Finally the duties have been divided between two people to keep up with all the orders.

One aspect of the activity has received very little attention lately: that of supplying seeds. Occasionally I get letters asking if I can use more seeds. I want to go on record right away and say YES. When I visit begonia shows and see all those gorgeous plants, I wonder why experienced growers fail to pollinate their plants and help furnish seeds for those desiring to enlarge their collections of begonias by starting from seeds. Perhaps they do not realize that seeds are in demand. If anyone is not quite certain how to go about producing seeds, refer to the article by Professor Doorenbos in the July 1975 issue of the *Begonian*.

I can sell any and all begonia

seeds. I do require information about the seeds. Names of the parent plants of hybrids, whenever possible, are needed. Seeds of species are especially desirable. It is important to accompany the seeds with a brief description of your plants, unless you are furnishing a miscellaneous mixture. To have enough to offer, there must be at least $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of one variety. If several of you each send a few seeds from one variety, it will be mixed and offered that way. Again I want to emphasize the importance of the basic descriptions such as is written in the monthly listings, telling the type of plant (rhizomatous, rex, cane, etc.), the height of the full grown plant, color of blooms, any characteristics that make it unusual, distinctive or fascinating.

Those who contribute seeds may request other seeds in exchange. Under some circumstances, payment is made for seeds.

At this time, I have a list of more than 40 persons who have paid for seeds of *B. rajah* and are waiting patiently for them. I have been looking for more seeds. Some of you have promised to send me seeds when you can, but so far, there are none to send out. This introduces another point. Many of you receive

your *Begonian* via first class postage. By the time the copies sent by second class mail arrive in the far away places, the rarer types are already spoken for. I feel sorry for those getting the magazines late and I sincerely hope that those who do get the rare seeds will in turn grow the plants and send seeds back to us so others can have a chance, too.

When ordering seeds it is advisable to list alternate choices in case your choice has already been depleted. Do not ask us to choose varieties for you. Our choices may not pique your interest or be suitable for your growing conditions. Also, you ask how far back can one go to order seeds? You can order from the issues printed during the last twelve months. Many times I receive fresh supplies of the same varieties, which is good, since I can fill back orders, or reoffer at a later month. I do recommend that when ordering from past issues, you do list substitutes that will be acceptable to you.

Another question that is frequently asked is how long begonia seeds last. If the seeds are kept dry, dark and cool, I have heard of seeds that were 5 years old being planted with a good germination rate.

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The Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund is for all of you. When you participate in the Seed Fund you also aid the catalogue and research projects of the ABS since 10% of the profits each month are designated to these uses. I hope you will join in as customer and supplier. Now and again I receive a note from someone who just enjoys getting acquainted with begonias by reading the descriptions. It makes me feel good to be able to give you that experience. I sincerely want to thank all of you who have become my friends through our correspondence while I have been seed fund director.

Send seeds to:

Mrs. Pearl Benell
10331 Colima Road
Whittier, CA 90604

Order seeds from:

Mrs. Linda Miller
P.O. Box 227
Gardena, CA 90247



Ja 9 — *Begonia plebeja*

Mini-Ads

The rate for advertising in this column is \$1 per line (about 36 characters) with a minimum charge of \$4. Payment for the ad must accompany order. Direct questions, copy, and checks to the Advertising Manager, Mabel Corwin.

Begonias, Gesneriads, miniature terrarium plants, tropicals, Catalog \$1. Kartuz Greenhouses, 92 Chestnut St., Wilmington, MA 01887. Phone (617) 658-9017

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Wyrzten Exotic Plants—begonias and gesneriads. Plants sold at house only. 260-01 87th Avenue (same as 165 Bryant Ave.), Floral Park, N.Y.
Ph. 212-347-3821

Begonias, oldies, collectors items, new hybrids, 20¢ for list, Stamps ok. Rainbow Begonia Gardens, Box 991, Westminster, CA 92683.

Bolduc's Greenhill Nursery—Exotic and hardy ferns. Send self-addressed stamped envelope for list. 2131 Vallejo Street, St. Helena, CA 94574



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- "Begonias from Seeds — Sowing and Growing"\$.25
 "Begonias in General — Basic Descriptions of
 Classes and Culture"50

The Bikerack #3, offered as Dc 1 in December, is a taller, more compact plant with very large pink blossoms with wavy or ruffled edges.

- Ja 1 — *B. Bikerack* #3. Rose-pink blooms. A generation better than the previous offer, selected for large flowers. Compact, very large, hardy plants per pkt. .50
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 Ja 3 — A mixture of seeds of all the above mentioned per pkt. .50
 Ja 4 — *B. convallariodora*. An elegant upright, shrub-like, loosely-branched plant from 2 to 3 ft. high. Leaves oval, pinnately nerved, up to 6 in. at maturity. Blooms in March with bunches of small, white flowers that some say smell like lily-of-the-valley per pkt. .50
 * Ja 5 — *B. decandra*. Shrub-like with small, bare leaves; grows to 3-4 ft. high. Flowers are small, white with a crimson heart...per pkt. 1.00
 Ja 6 — *B. domingensis*: 1959, San Domingo. Shrub-like, much like *B. decandra*, but the plant is smaller and more floriferous. Both are easy to grow. The flowers have a curious spicy smell...per pkt. .50
 * Ja 7 — *B. egregia*: 1887, Brazil. A thick-stemmed species, grows 3-4 ft., leaves lanceolate, hairy, large (up to 12" long). White flowers in winter through March, in large pendant bunches; the female ones are very fragrant. per pkt. .50
 * Ja 8 — *B. ottonis*. This is one of the "mystery" begonias. See article, October 1975, page 262. per pkt. 1.00
 * Ja 9 — *B. plebeja*: 1853, Nicaragua. Up to 1 ft., thick stems, ascending; leaves up to 5 in., broadly ovate with long drawn-out tip, dull green above, brownish tomentose underneath. Flowers are pink. See picture. per pkt. 1.00
 * Ja 10 — *B. santae-martae*: 1949, Columbia. Rhizomatous with leaves 8 to 10 in., hairy; flowers in large bunches, pinkish white. Offered in *Begonian*, July '74, as San Lorenzo, Columbia, unidentified species.

Other seeds: per pkt. .50

Impatiens. I was lucky to receive these seeds from Pennsylvania. They are mixed colors and very showy bedding or pot plants. per pkt. .50

Petunias. These also came from Pennsylvania, are "Giant of California".

These were hand pollinated and should produce very large blooms.

..... per pkt. .50

Manihot: commonly called the tapioca tree. This is tree-like, growing 15-20 ft. tall. A favorite of Clarence Hall. It has alternate, lobed leaves; white

CLAYTON M. KELLY SEED FUND

flowers on racemes. The fleshy roots are harvested for tapioca. A beautiful lacy tree, goes dormant in winter. 10 seeds .50
California residents, please add 6% sales tax. All customers, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Make all checks and money orders payable in U. S. funds, to Clayton M. Kelly Seed Fund. Mail to Mrs. Linda Miller, P. O. Box 227, Gardena, CA 90247.

B. PICTA RETURNS

(Continued from Page 3)

the small pots into a larger pot to use the mixture for fern spore . . . As it got warm in August 1975 I noticed those beautifully marked leaves coming up. I moved the plants back into separate pots and they grew well. Each plant has a different shading of brown on the leaves. Some are almost completely green, some mostly brown. I placed the plants in September into my large bush house under a bench where they get strong light.

(A later note) At present we are having one cyclone after the other off our northern coast and here in Brisbane we have had unending rain. It's a wonder the begonias survive. But it is warm and that is probably why. Our weather this past three years has been all wrong, with inches more rain than is normal. The *B. picta* plants are in a protected area under a bench but still get very wet. Maybe this is why *picta* is flowering so well. I have tried some pollen on other begonias that are still in flower . . . Results at a later date.

The Indoor Light Gardening Society of America, Inc., Dept. B, 128 West 58th St., New York, New York 10019. Dues \$5.00. Bi-monthly magazine; light garden; up-to-date, informative; seed fund; round robins; chapters.

HYBRIDIZING FOR BEGINNERS

(Continued from Page 7)

by baking in an oven for an hour at 180 degrees. The seedling medium must be moist for sowing seed. Sow seed thinly over the mix, pressing very lightly with finger tips. Water the container from the bottom until you see moisture on top of the medium. Let container drain thoroughly before enclosing it in a plastic bag closed securely. If possible, put container in a warm place, 75 to 80 degrees, in strong light but never in the full sun—for the interior would heat up to an alarming degree. Most fresh seed germinates quickly but that obtained from some begonias may take weeks. When seedlings are 1/2 to one inch high, I like to transplant them to a community pot or container placing them about two inches apart in a standard potting mix. Not until leaves touch are the seedlings transplanted to two inch pots. Shift to larger sizes as the roots fill the pots.

Soon you will be seeing the results of your hybridizing as plants mature and you can select the best.

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NEWS AND NOTICES

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Nathan Randall, Director of the Speakers Bureau, is eager to add names to his roster to aid in branch programs. He has an urgent request from the new Central San Joaquin Branch for the names of speakers who would be willing to address its meetings. This enthusiastic branch is somewhat removed geographically from others in California. Those speakers who are willing to help the branch get off to a good start should contact Nathan Randall or Eleanor Hollis, 548 East Mill Ave., Porterville, CA 03257.

INVITATION

The Tucson African Violet Society will hold a horticultural and artistic show March 5 (from 3 to 8 o'clock) and March 6 (10 to 5). The show is at Christopher City, University Married Students Housing, 3401 N. Columbus Blvd., Tucson. Admission is free. For additional information, contact Betsy Evans, 4430 E. Presidio Place, Tucson, AZ 87512.

BOOK DELAYS

The three new books about begonias by Alice Clark, Elda Haring, and Millie Thompson have been delayed because of staff and technical difficulties at the various publishers. The matters should be resolved soon and the books forthcoming. The Revised Editions of the *Thompson Begonia Guide* are being distributed and are not involved in the delay.

LIBRARY

Lydia Austin, ABS Librarian, will welcome donations of back issues of the *Begonian* for redistribution.

CHANGE NAMES

In the printing process the photograph on page 309, November issue, was reversed, so that the names of the people should read: Walt Hansen, Lori Hansen, Gene Daniels.

ADD NAMES

To the list of personnel for the Begonia Heritage Committee must be added the names of Mary Birchell, Ruth Gilbert and Nettie Daniels. These women also worked on Show registration, classification and plant placement with Thelma O'Reilly. We are sorry not to have credited their efforts in the November issue along with the other workers.

GROWER RETIRES

Dear Friends and Customers:

I wish to notify everyone that I am going out of the begonia plant business because of ill health. I have enjoyed having you as friends and customers. I wish you all luck in growing begonias and thank you for your business.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Rosetta White
1602 N. W. 3rd St.,
Abilene, KS 67410

SPECIAL REQUEST

Pearl Benell is looking for bulbs or seeds of *Begonia* 'Trumpet Daffodil' for one of the seed suppliers. If you can furnish either, for sale or in

The circulation office has a new address. Send dues to:

American Begonia Society
Jacqueline Garinger
8302 Kittyhawk Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90045

exchange, contact her for more information.

ARTIST

We welcome Rosemary Flamion to the *Begonian* staff. She is a student of horticulture and art at California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo. Her drawings accompany the articles by Bill Farmer and Evelyn Weidner in this issue. We are most fortunate to have her services.

NEW YEAR—NEW OFFICERS

Please check your Branch Directory entry in the December issue to see if the listing is correct. If not please send the list of new officers to ABS Secretary Virginia Barnett. Include the name of the national representative so it can be listed with the board of directors.

BEGONIA QUESTION BOX

We rescued it from the attic and gave it a sprucing up. The old question box is all set up and ready for action. Elda Haring has agreed to handle questions from the readers. Although it was suggested as a service to the members-at-large who have no one to consult with, anyone with a begonia problem can ask Elda for advice. She promises to locate help for you if she does not know the answers personally. Elda has spoken to clubs and conducted workshops and written about begonias, so she is a great person to have on the job. Write to the Begonia Question Box, Elda Haring, Box 236, Flat Rock NC 28731.

NEWSLETTERS

The Editors receive copies of many branch bulletins. Some of them are very elaborate and detailed, some are very short and to the point. All of

them contain helpful information. They give us ideas about what is interesting to you.

We want to take this opportunity, at the start of a new year, to send special words of appreciation to the people who compose and send out these copies. We want you to know that we read and enjoy your newsletters. Many thanks to those who have served in this way. Please don't drop us from the mailing lists.

PHOTOGRAPHS SOUGHT

If you have photographs of ABS registered cultivars, particularly the earlier numbers, send copies to Rudy Zieshenne, Nomenclature Director, who is trying to assemble a complete set for identification purposes.

WORKSHOP PLANNED

The Westchester branch will hold a workshop January 14 on potting mixes, potting and repotting. It will be directed by Lu Kaytis.

TALK ABOUT FOOD

Brent Holden will speak on Grow-Power, organic-base fertilizer and soil conditioner at the Redondo area Branch meeting, January 27th.

Historical Interest — Modern Value

LES BEGONIAS

\$10. Order from ABS Library
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MOVING?

If you are planning to move, be sure to send a change of address notice to the Membership Secretary. Copies of the *Begonian* which are sent by Second Class Mail are returned to the office and are not forwarded by the Post Office.

RESEARCH REPORT

M. Carleton L'Hommedieu, Research Director

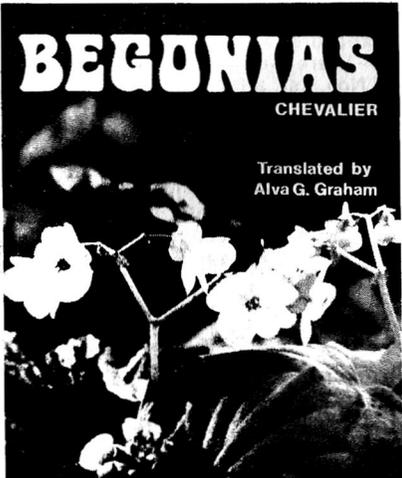
Dr. Durkin, Head of the Horticulture Department at Rutgers University, wrote that he had determined that the research to be carried out with ABS funds had not been done. The \$600 was returned to the Research Fund. I would like to start another begonia project with this money in the near future.

Suzanne Bonner wrote a report covering work in which both she and Ann Councill participated. Copies of the report were distributed at the Eastern Convention. Suzanne also made a poster display for the Eastern Meeting, which illustrated the work that is being carried on.

Financial Report

Balance, August 31, 1976	\$ 397.83
Receipts	
Long Island Branch	20.00
Seed Fund	16.74
Mr. and Mrs. Ziesenhenne, In Memory of	
Peggy McGrath	10.00
May Taft Drew	10.00
Interest	3.05
Refund from Rutgers	600.00
	\$ 659.79
	1057.62
Disbursements	
N. Y. Botanical Library	350.00 350.00
Balance, October 25, 1976	\$ 707.62

A contribution to the Research Fund was made by the Orange County Branch. It was incorrectly attributed to the Newport Branch in the report printed in October.



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**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
DIRECTORS OF THE
AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY
October 25, 1976**

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 P.M. in the South Gate Auditorium with Charles A. Richardson presiding. After the opening ceremonies the minutes of the Sept. 27, 1976 meeting were read and approved as corrected. The motion concerning the printing of registered begonia cultivars had been tabled pending the receipt from Mr. Bates of more information about the cost of type-setting. The President proposed the following appointments:

A committee to continue the investigation of the non-profit status of the A.B.S. Chairman to be Bill Walton, and members Gil Estrada and Doug Frost;

Margaret Taylor to locate a suitable place for the 1977 Flower Show and Convention;

Walter Barnett to file claims for refund of the Social Security taxes which had been previously filed and paid.

Virginia Barnett to serve as Secretary of the American Begonia Society.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the above motions were passed by the Board of Directors.

Treasurer Estrada reported a balance of \$8,211.67 as of Sept. 30, 1976 in the checking account. He also informed the Board that the fidelity bond premium was now due, and that the premium for the bond had been increased to \$103.00. A motion was made and passed to pay the premium and keep the policy in force. A motion was made and passed that the financial budget and monthly treasurer's reports be given to all Board members. Walter Barnett moved that \$5,000 of the funds in the checking account be transferred to the Special Savings Account, with \$600 of this amount to be earmarked for Branch plant moving expenses for the National Show, as previously resolved at the Board meeting of Sept. 27, 1976.

Editor Bates reported a meeting of his committee to discuss the **Begonian**, cultivars, and other printing. He reminded the Board that the 1st of the month is deadline for publishing of the next month issue. His motion to prepay 6 months of paper for the **Begonian** was passed after discussion of the savings to the A.B.S.

Mabel Corwin, Advtg. Mgr. was unable to be present. However, she had advised Pres. Richardson that she would try to write the Round Robin Notes for 3 months for **Begonian**. Her offer was accepted.

After the secretary read his report, Pres. Richardson asked the Board to approve

the appointment of Carlton L'Hommedieu as Research Director for another term. Motion of appointment was made and passed. Mr. Ziesenhenné moved that the Research Fund be reimbursed the \$300.00 cost of photocopying the material at the New York Botanical Garden Library. Motion passed.

The secretary read Past President Ziesenhenné's report, requesting that she be repaid for personal funds she had used to pay ABS social security taxes; also that she objected to the appointment of Walter Barnett to file claims for refund of Social Security taxes previously paid. It was Board consensus that she should be repaid at such time as the ABS would receive its refund.

Chairman Pearl Benell reported deposits of \$906.88 to the Seed Fund account for the period August through October 19, and that the Fund had a working balance of \$183.79.

Marge Lee submitted the report of the Judges Courses.

After Branch reports, the meeting adjourned at 9:35 P.M.

Virginia J. Barnett, Secretary

**CONDENSED MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
AMERICAN BEGONIA SOCIETY
November 22, 1976**

President Richardson called the meeting together at 7:45 in the South Gate Auditorium. The minutes were read and approved as corrected: Debi Miller had not resigned as Round Robin Director, but Mabel Corwin would write the notes for the **Begonian**.

Mr. Estrada requested reimbursement of \$58.80 he had been required to pay the former treasurer for transportation of the Treasurer's file and records from Ventura. There was a balance of \$7,187.19 as of Nov. 1st, after the transfer of \$1,100. to the Convention Fund Account.

Mr. L'Hommedieu, Research Director, reported a balance of \$754.38, and requested addition of Pearl Benell to the Research Committee. It was approved.

All branches should inform Secretary Barnett of newly elected officers, including names and addresses together with meeting dates, place, and time of meeting.

Mabel Corwin advised the Board an invoice from **Horticulture** of \$338.40 for the A.B.S. classified ad was due for 1977. Motion passed to pay yearly. Mr. Walton asked to amend the budget to include this amount. Passed.

Margaret Taylor informed the Board she had investigated several places for the 1977 Flower Show and Convention. Bill Walton and Marge Lee were appointed to

assist her, and make a selection for dates and location. Passed.

It was approved to send complimentary subscription of the **Begonian** to the Ceritos Community College for their horticulture department.

Mr. Walton moved that \$1,000, instead of \$600 approved at the October meeting, be placed in the Convention Fund. Passed. A request for \$500, for the travel fund did not pass.

Marge Lee read a letter of thanks from The Garden Club of America. She also gave the treasurer a check for \$1,214., the Flower Show and Convention balance, and submitted the records for auditing to be conducted by the Finance Committee.

After Branch reports, the meeting adjourned at 9:54 P.M.

Virginia J. Barnett, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

Robert E. Hale

Robert E. Hale, a long time ABS member, passed away suddenly November 9th. Dora, his wife of 48 years, and Bob joined the Sacramento Branch in 1957. He served as its president in 1966, and in many other capacities throughout his membership. For three years he was vice president of the National Society. He was a clerk at the National Show for the past two years.

Bob was employed at McClellan Air Force Base as an aircraft technician until his retirement in 1972. He was a first aid and safety instructor for the American Red Cross and at the time of his death was on the Disaster Team.

In addition to ABS, Bob was a member of the American Fuchsia Society and Cactus and Succulent Society and the Sacramento Fern Forum. Bob Hale was one of those rare individuals who thought nothing of giving completely of himself. He was always willing to share his knowledge and time with others.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ELECTED OFFICERS

President	Charles A. Richardson
	5444 Hartwick St., Los Angeles, CA 90041
Past President	Margaret Ziesenhenn
	1130 N. Milpas St., Santa Barbara, CA 93103
First Vice President	Nathan Randall
	8200 Irondale Ave., Canoga Park, CA 91306
Second Vice President	Evelyn Cronin
	88 Ledgeways, Wellesley Hills, MA 02181
Third Vice President	Ralph Corwin
	1119 Loma Vista Way, Vista, CA 92083
Treasurer	Gilbert A. Estrada
	7914 Springer St., Downey, CA 92042
Secretary	Virginia Barnett
	1213 S. Mullender Ave., West Covina, CA 91790

APPOINTED OFFICERS

Branch Relations Director	Evelyn Cronin
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